



Re: 2010 ACL Amendment

My name is Sera Harold Drevenak, and I am here on behalf of the Pew Environment Group's Ending Overfishing in the Southeast Campaign. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in support of science-based Annual Catch Limits and accountability measures for the fisheries of the US Caribbean.

My family came to St. Croix in 1985. I can remember swimming here at Davis Bay before the hotel was built, my father teaching me how to snorkel; how to swim slowly, looking around with my hands behind my back so I wouldn't damage any coral. I can remember not sleeping before my first trip to Buck Island, where as an 8 year-old, the number and size of the fish terrified me. We are all in this room because of experiences like that, and yet, my children may never see what I did. An ocean filled with sharks, large mutton snapper and Nassau grouper. One with abundant parrotfish, every color of the rainbow. The current state of fisheries in our islands has been called "catastrophic" among other things. As people who live here, who depend on the ocean for our livelihoods, food, and well-being, we need to think more about our children than we do about ourselves. What will we leave them with?

Other parts of the world have tried to push the limits of science to get one more grouper, one more tuna, and it hasn't worked. The trade-off for short term economic gain is often decades of low catches and even collapsed ecosystems. When the best scientists in the Caribbean tell us that large area closures and dramatic harvest cuts may be the only way to make sure there are fish for our children, we have every reason to believe them. My interest is not to turn the ocean into an aquarium, but to see Crucian fishermen 10 years from now so busy fishing that they don't have time to attend meetings. That is what we all want.

The best way to ensure larger catches in the future is to have annual catch limits and accountability measures now, which the Council is proposing.

It is clear that delaying fisheries cuts only worsens the hardship on fishermen and local economies, and that short term economic losses cannot preclude a long-term sustainable fishery.

We look forward to working with you throughout this amendment process so that our islands' fishery resources are sustainably managed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sera Drevenak

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